



# Greenwich Education Group

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

### STAFF BIOS (ALPHABETIZED BY FIRST NAME)

**\*\* LAST UPDATED 11.13.2019 \*\***

**Betsy Varian** is a special education teacher with current certifications in Comprehensive Special Education, grades K-12, and English, grades 7-12. She has been teaching for nearly twenty years. In previous settings, she has worked full-time at the Villa Maria School in Stamford, CT, New Milford High School, and Newfield School in Stamford. Betsy earned her bachelor's degree in English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then went on to a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan. She also has a master's degree in special education from Fairfield University and English Literature from Western Connecticut State University.

**Brennan Kelly** graduated from Williams College majoring in Political Economy. He spent over a decade in Washington, D.C. where he worked with leading economists on public policy issues at the Brookings Institution. He later worked at consulting firms, providing economic analysis and advisory services to both business and government. He has shared his passion for learning a wide variety of subjects as a tutor for Academic Services and as a teacher at Links Academy.

**Emma Paynter** joined the Greenwich Education Group (GEG) in the fall of 2017, and brings more than twenty years of teaching, language tutoring and counseling experience with K through 12th grade students. Her approach integrates a comprehensive understanding of students' learning profiles, as well as an appreciation for their psychosocial, emotional and cognitive developmental needs. Her goal is to encourage each student's unique voice and to promote confidence. She strives to find creative and multi-sensory ways to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful. She approaches all experiences from a unique lens that blends her years of study and work in the three fields of education, psychology and special education. Emma graduated from Fordham University with a BA in French and Italian Literature and a minor in Psychology. She then pursued her interest in psychology at Columbia University, where she obtained her MA and Ed.M. from Teachers College in Psychological Counseling. As a successful private tutor, Emma developed her skills in the area of one-on-one instruction, working with students with learning differences, as well as students with reading, writing, language, homework studies and executive function needs.

**George Herson** is a standardized test tutor at Greenwich Education Group and a computer science teacher at Links Academy in Stamford. He has tutored students in the verbal sections of the SAT, ISEE and SSAT, helping them apply critical test-taking strategies to improve their scores. George carefully evaluates his students' strengths and development areas before designing customized study programs. George holds a BS in computer science with honors from Long Island University and is currently completing a master's degree in computer science from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

**James Donovan** has over a decade of tutoring experience with specific focus on helping students prepare for standardized tests and independent school and college applications. James tutors both the verbal and math sections of the SAT and ACT. In addition to working with several tutoring agencies, James started his own tutoring business to support students in a wide range of academic subjects. He is passionate and driven, with a strong desire to help students achieve. James was an All American rower

at Princeton University, winning national championships, and currently serves as head coach and director of the Norwalk River Rowing Association.

**Jeff Zuckerman** has been at GEG for over five years, working as both a teacher and a tutor. Building on his own expertise--Jeff was one of the very few people to ever score the coveted "800+" on the GRE Verbal section—he was originally trained in standardized test prep by the Kaplan organization. Jeff has since tutored hundreds of students – in both verbal and math - for the SAT, ACT, ISEE, SSAT, and several other tests. Jeff did his undergraduate work at Brown University and received an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Florida, where he also completed the coursework required for a Ph.D. in English Literature.

**Jenna Wylie** In 2016, Jenna graduated from Mercy College with her M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology. She is certified as a Teacher of Students with Speech and Language Disabilities (TSSLD) in the state of New York and a Level II American Sign Language tutor through the College Reading and Learning Association. She is a licensed through ASHA in both Connecticut and New York. Jenna is a certified provider for CAPDOTS (Central Auditory Processing Disorders Online Therapy System), an online dichotic listening training program, as well as "Fast ForWord,". She is also involved in the facilitation and implementation of the Social Cognition program at The Pinnacle School.

**Joanne Sabato** has always had a strong desire to make a difference in the world. Shortly after receiving her certification in Speech Pathology, Joanne opened a private practice which grew exponentially into an integrative therapy center that provides a wide range of Services to children from birth to 21 years throughout Westchester County. Throughout her career, has had extensive experience with a wide range of speech and language disabilities. She is trained in Lindamood Bell, Visualizing Verbalizing and Michelle Garcia Winner's Social Thinking Programs. She is currently licensed in CT and NY

**Kimberly Stewart** has been working as a Sensory based occupational therapist for 9 years. She is a compassionate therapist who has worked with children of all ages. Kim graduated Summa Cum Laude from Western New England College in 2008 with a Bachelor's degree in Communications and Psychology. She graduated from Sacred Heart University in 2010 with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy. Kim has taken courses for higher level training in praxis, integrating reflexes, Integrated listening systems auditory programs, handwriting without tears, and feeding therapy. Kim lives with her husband and two children and enjoys being outdoors, and spending time with her family.

**Lauren D'Andrea** is one of our most versatile tutors specializing in writing, math, and standardized test preparation. She has a background in elementary education and extensive teaching experience with middle-school age students but she is also one of our most experienced test prep tutors at the high school level. She covers both verbal and math sections of the ACT, SAT, ISEE and SSAT. Lauren's teaching style is both nurturing and rigorous. Lauren earned her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Teacher Education from the University of Delaware and a Master's in Education from Western Connecticut State University. She has worked for Stamford and Bethel Public Schools for 13 years.

**Margaret Dibernardino** has extensive experience as a math and quantitative standardized test prep instructor. The key to Margaret's success, and the resulting success of her students, is her ability to deconstruct mathematical concepts in order to make them easier for her students to understand. Her comprehensive teaching approach is positive and encouraging. Margaret earned a B.A. in Computer Science with a minor in secondary education for mathematics from the Herbert H. Lehman College of the City University of New York.

**Maria Mata** has both her CT State Teaching Certification and her Masters in Education. She has been teaching in the Greenwich Public Schools for over 20 years, and she currently teaches 4th grade at the North Mianus School. Even though she is an elementary school teacher, she also has a passion for teaching higher level math, and is able to tap into that passion through her tutoring (for us, she does almost exclusively math tutoring, most of it at the middle school and high school level). She can teach up to SAT-level math, and has a particular passion for Pre-Algebra and Algebra. Her teaching style is very patient, kind and detail-oriented, and she is quite gifted in explaining complicated concepts in a way that makes them seem simple and easy-to-grasp.

**Paula Crotty** has been tutoring math at Greenwich Education for over five years. Her experience in both the educational and corporate worlds helps her students see the connection between real life and math. She is very nurturing and warm, but is also serious about having as productive a session as possible. Paula has great patience and understanding for her students. She makes sure that they learn all the steps and basics before moving on to new topics and challenges. She also has extensive experience in working with students on quantitative test-prep (SAT, ACT, ISEE and SSAT).

Dr. **Renee Krochek** is a school and clinical psychologist who earned her PsyD at Pace University. Currently working in a school and in private practice, she strives to help children do well academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally. Dr. Krochek conducts therapy and psychological assessments with regular education and special education students. To accompany her school and clinical work, Dr. Krochek's research interests and publications explore the areas of parenting and child development. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Pace University.

**Robert Kelly** tutors chemistry and physics at all levels. He teaches these subjects at Links Academy in Stamford. Robert designs curriculums that make complicated subjects more understandable while still challenging his students to push their limits. He tutors the math sections of the SAT and ACT. Robert earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of Rhode Island and completed course work toward a PhD in Chemical Engineering.

**Sarah Leahey** received her BS in Communicative Disorders and Sciences from the State University of New York College at Geneseo and her MS in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of the District of Columbia. A PROMPT-trained clinician, Sarah has fifteen years of experience working with children ranging in age from two to sixteen years of age. She was a parenting educator for three years at the nonprofit Room to Grow, where she worked with low-income families in New York City. Sarah resides in Riverside, CT with her husband and two daughters. She enjoys reading, running, and spending time with family and friends.

**Sarah J. Morris:** Sarah has been a long-term employee at GE. Prior to GEG she held a variety of roles in the business world, fashion industry, corporate marketing and health and fitness industry. She landed at GEG in 2012 and discovered her passion and commitment to youth and educational services. Sarah has been at the helm of multiple departments, as an Administrative Coordinator, and has the systems historical information required to keep the technological, scheduling and services implementation moving forward with ease and organization. She currently is the Administrative Manager and Registrar with the Learning and Development Center and the Links Academy and is the welcoming face and friendly voice when a client contacts the office.